

### REMARKS

Claims 1-32 are pending in the application. Claims 1-32 stand rejected. Claims 1, 12, and 22 are hereby amended. Applicant respectfully requests consideration of the following remarks and allowance of the claims.

Claims 1, 4-6, 8-9, 11-13, 16-19, 21-22, 25-27, 29-30, and 32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,026,078 (Smith). Applicant respectfully disagrees for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 now requires, in part, a communication hub having a control system configured to switch between either a configuration mode or an operation mode. A mode selection interface receives a user input selecting either the configuration mode or the operation mode. When in the configuration mode, the communication hub is configured to process a registration request comprising an off-hook signal from an authorized communication device to authorize the communication device. When in the operation mode, the communication hub is configured to exchange communications between previously registered communication devices, the newly registered communication device, and a network system.

In contrast, Smith fails to disclose a hub receiving and processing a registration request comprising an off-hook signal from an authorized communication device to authorize the communication device.

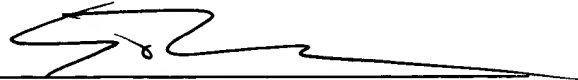
In particular, Smith discloses a station 46 that requests to join a Token Ring (col. 5, lines 50-51). The station 46 8 generates and transmits a request to hub 44 to join the Token Ring. Smith teaches that the request could be a phantom current that is transmitted through port 52 to port 50 (col. 5, lines 52-53). A phantom current is not an off-hook signal, as required by claim 1. Claim 1 is therefore novel and non-obvious over Smith.

Independent claims 12 and 22 are allowable for reasons similar to claim 1. Applicant refrains from a discussion of the dependent claims for the sake of brevity.

**CONCLUSION**

The claims in their present form are allowable over the art of record. Applicant therefore solicits their allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



**SIGNATURE OF PRACTITIONER**

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